

177725

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION REPORT

I. HEADING

DATE: May 23, 2003

SUBJECT: Posen Chemical Fire, Posen, Cook County, Illinois

FROM: Craig Thomas, OSC, U.S. EPA, Region 5, Chicago, IL

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POLREP #: Initial and Final including photos

II. BACKGROUND

Site ID No.:	NA
CERCLIS ID No.:	NA
Delivery Order Number:	NA
Response Authority:	CERCLA
NPL Status:	Not on NPL
State Notification:	IDEM notified
Latitude/Longitude:	41.64016° / -87.67957°
Start Date:	Monday, May 19, 2003
Completion Date:	Monday, May 19, 2003

III. SITE INFORMATION

A. Incident Category

CERCLA Emergency Response – Fire at a plastic manufacturing facility caused release of chemicals into storm drains.

B. Site Description

1. Site Location

The fire occurred at the Fiber Drum Sales (Fiber Drum) facility located at 2437 139th Place, Posen, Cook County, Illinois. The site is bordered by residential properties to the north, a large parking area to the south, Peer and Berkshire Foods to the west, and Western Avenue to the east. The site consists of two buildings and a drum and container storage area west of the facility. The site is partially secured to the south by a chain-link fence.

2. Description of Threat

On Monday, May 19, 2003, a fire destroyed two buildings belonging to the Fiber Drum site. The Fiber Drum facility washed, detoxified, and recycled used plastic and compressed cardboard drums and barrels. Untreated drums potentially contained small amounts of hazardous or explosive chemicals. The building also contained drums with cleaning products. Water used to extinguish the fire may have mixed with the hazardous chemicals and cleaning products associated with this site and potentially posed an imminent threat to human health and the environment.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

A. Situation

1. **Current situation:**

On Monday, May 19, 2003, EPA On Scene Coordinators (OSC), Craig Thomas and Brad Benning; two Tetra Tech, EMI (Tetra Tech) Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) members: Ed Osowski, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) representative; Robert Steele, Chief, Posen Fire Department (PFD); representatives from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago; and approximately 100 fire crew members from several local fire departments, including Posen, Blue Island, Dixmoor, Calumet Park, Alsip, Crestwood, Palos, Midlothian, Orland, and Hazelcrest mobilized to site in response to the fire. Chief Steele contacted IEPA and EPA to determine if water runoff or air particulates posed a threat to human health and the environment.

2. **Site activities to date:**

At approximately 9:30 am, START arrived at the site to perform site and perimeter air monitoring. Based on discussions and information provided by firemen from the PFD and Chief Steele, the fire broke out at 6:45 am and was under control and extinguished by 9:00 am. Members of the PFD conducted an inspection of the facility and indicated that several thousand drums, located inside and stored to the west of the building, contained various types of chemicals including plastics, hexane, and a caustic cleaning solution. In consultation with a chemist from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the PFD determined that combustion of the plastics could also generate compounds such as carbon dioxide, formaldehyde, and acetic acid.

START used a photo ionization detector (PID) and a flame ionization detector (FID) to collect perimeter air monitor readings. Readings to the north, south, east, and west of the facility were 0 parts per million (ppm).

START also took a pH reading of water runoff that puddled south of the facility near the railroad tracks. The pond of standing water was approximately 350 feet long by 25 feet wide and exhibited a pH of 11 standard units.

At approximately 11:30, Chief Steele informed EPA that the owner of the facility assumed full responsibility for site clean up activities to address the ponding water with elevated pH, and any remaining drummed contents. Because the fire no longer posed an imminent threat to human health and the environment, Chief Steele indicated that START and EPA were dismissed from the Incident Command Structure. However EPA and IEPA remained behind to ensure that the property owner's environmental contractor had a clear idea of the environmental concerns that should be addressed. EPA then left the site at approximately 12:30 pm.

B. Planned Removal Activities

None. Potential Responsible Party (PRP) lead.

C. Next Steps

None. PRP lead.

D. Key Issues

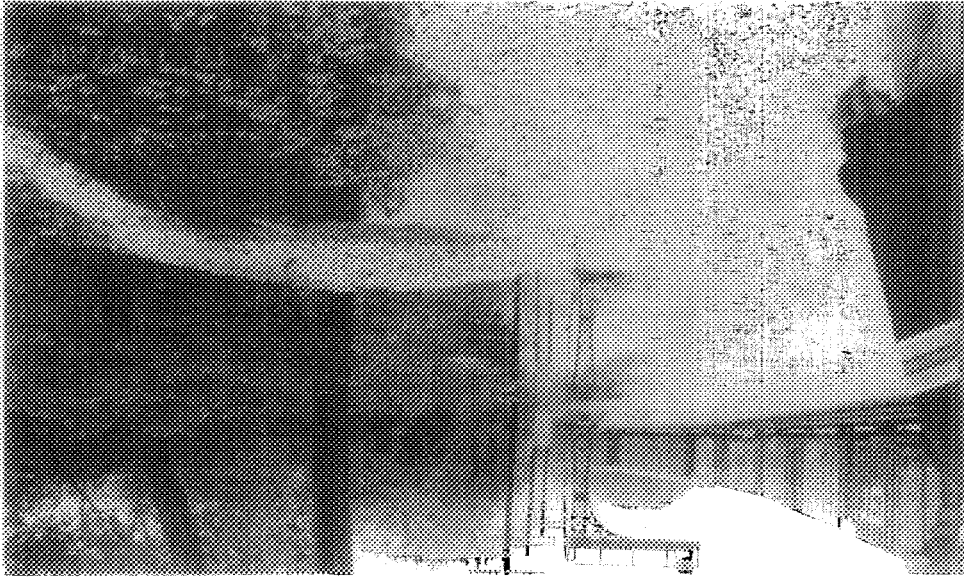
None. PRP lead.

V. COST INFORMATION

START estimated costs as of May 2003: \$1,000.

The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data, which the OSC must rely upon, may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

Subject: Puddled water located south of the facility.



Subject: Destroyed containers stored west of the building.

